

## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**(Official Report)**

**Regular Meeting**

**Tuesday, June 7, 2005**

Members Present: Mr. Fantini, Mr. Grassi, Mr. Harding, Mr. Lummis, Mr. McGovern, Ms. Walser,  
Mayor Sullivan

Mayor Sullivan in the Chair.

Also Present: Student Representatives James Conway, Krishana House

A quorum of the School Committee being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m. On behalf of the Members, Mayor Sullivan congratulated Dr. Michael Ananis, Executive Director of RSTA and his staff on receiving full DOE accreditation for all of its programs.

### **Presentation of the Records of Previous Meetings**

On a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Mr. McGovern, it was voted that the Minutes of the following meetings be accepted as presented:

- Regular Meeting - May 3, 2005 - Corrected
- Regular Meeting - May 17, 2005

On a motion by Mr. Lummis, seconded by Ms. Walser, it was voted to suspend the Rules for the purpose of hearing a special presentation.

Dr. Knight reported that the "Woman2Woman" Teen Health Fair was very successful and well-attended especially since it was held the day after the Senior prom. Dr. Knight introduced Woman2Woman participants Teyhanie Boone and Yessenia Montes, and Joyce Maduski, Cambridge Commission on the Status of Women, who shared their experiences with the first "Woman2Woman" program. The students gave the Members a "Woman2Woman" gift bag.

### **Public Comment on School Committee Agenda**

The following individual was heard:

- Paul Toner, CTA President, re congratulations to RSTA staff and thanks to DOE for accreditation

On a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Mr. Fantini, it was voted to close public comment.

### **Reports and/or Comments from Student School Committee Members**

The Chair thanked James Conway for his service and presented him with a plaque. Mr. Conway thanked his peers and the Members for a wonderful year and announced that he is running for Senior Class President.

**Reconsideration of Votes Taken at Previous Meeting:** None

**Unfinished Business**

On a motion by Mayor Sullivan, it was voted to take from the Calendar the Minutes of May 3, 2005 and place them on file.

Mr. Lummis raised a question on the status of the report on the teacher and guidance counselor evaluation systems. The Superintendent was heard.

### New Business

Mr. McGovern moved, seconded by Mr. Lummis, for adoption of items #05-079 through #05-090. Ms. Walser removed # 05-087 and #05-089. Mr. Grassi removed #05-081. Mr. Fantini removed #05-083. On the following roll call, the remaining items were adopted:

**#05-079, Approval to go into Executive Session:** that the School Committee go into executive session for the purpose of discussing strategy for collective bargaining, including hearing Level III grievances, and strategy for litigation as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining and litigation positions of the School Committee.

**#05-080, School Committee Calendar SY2005/2006 and the Academic School Calendar and School Committee Calendar SY2006/2007:** that the School Committee approve the recommendation of the Superintendent for the School Committee Calendar for SY2005/2006 and the Academic and School Committee Calendar for SY2006/2007.

**#05-082, Special Needs Contracts for Day Program Services** not available from the Cambridge School Department: that the School Committee award contracts to the institutions on the list in amounts not to exceed the shown rates, having been approved by the Operational Services Division of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, funds to be provided from the general fund budget:

1 student	SHORE Collaborative, 99 Fourth St., Chelsea, MA	\$20,703.60
1 student	EDCO Collaborative, 20 Kent St., Brookline, MA	27,000.00
<u>1</u> student	Farr Academy, 71 Pearl St., Cambridge, MA	<u>8,193.92</u>
3 students		\$55,897.52

**#05-084, FY04-05 General Fund Budget Statutory Transfers:** that the School Committee approve the following statutory transfers of appropriation within the General Fund budget for FY2004-05:

	<u>Statutory Coding</u>	<u>Increase Amount</u>	<u>Decrease Amount</u>
51000	Salaries, Wages & Benefits		(\$490,660.00)
52000/55000	Other Ordinary Maintenance	\$238,300.00	
57000	Travel/Training/Settlements		(36,922.00)
58000/59000	Extraordinary Expenditures	<u>289,282.00</u>	<u>0</u>
	Total	\$527,582.00	(\$527,582.00)

**#05-085, Grant Awards:** that the School Committee accept and approve the grant awards in the amounts and for the periods indicated:

1. Content Institutes, Project/Grant SC05802, in the amount of \$47,650.00, for the period March 30, 2005 to August 31, 2005. These funds will be used to focus on the manipulation of photographic images in the making of art and will explore the use of photographic images in the making of digital art or making prints using a lithographic process and photocopier. These funds will also be used to focus on improving the content and pedagogical knowledge of elementary and middle school music teachers through content-rich areas of study based on the principles and philosophy of Zoltan Kodály. Knowledge of concepts and skills in the curriculum frameworks will be deepened.
2. New Technology, Project/Code SC05803, in the amount of \$25,000.00, for the period May 25, 2005 to August 31, 2005. These funds will be used to purchase new equipment and supplies for the Rindge School of Technical Arts program. Students will learn how to operate various machines, and also learn ways of planning a business function, and general accounting practices of restaurant/hotel business.

**#05-086, Letter dated May 18, 2005, from D. Margaret Drury**, City Clerk, enclosing a City Council Resolution in support of the "Reverse the Cuts" effort.

**#05-088, Joint motion by Mr. Grassi and Mr. Fantini** that the Superintendent provide the School Committee with an update on how the School Department will provide science support to the Tobin School for the next school year given the fact the science grant is in the final year of funding.

**#05-090, Motion by Ms. Walser** that the Superintendent provide the School Committee with a report on the progress of implementing middle school portfolios and adding them to the CPS Benchmarks.

Mr. Harding YEA, Mr. Lummis YEA, Mr. McGovern YEA, Ms. Walser YEA, Mr. Fantini YEA, Mr. Grassi YEA, Mayor Sullivan YEA.

#### **Non-Consent Business**

**#05-081, Approval of Non-Discrimination Policy and Prohibition Against Sexual Harassment.**

Mr. Grassi moved an amendment to page 3, section III, line 6, to strike the word "should" and replace it with "shall". On a voice vote, **#05-081** is referred for a second reading, as amended.

Mr. Fantini raised a question on whether estimated surplus for the year has been determined. Mr. Conry was heard in the affirmative. On the following roll call, **#05-083, Transfer to Debt Stabilization Fund**, was adopted as follows: that the School Committee approve a transfer in the amount of \$4,625,000 from the FY04-05 General Fund operating budget to the Debt Stabilization Fund, such amount being available from balances in special education tuition accounts as a result of the increase in state Circuit-Breaker reimbursements and lower than estimated numbers of students in tuition placements. The Debt Stabilization fund will be used to fund future school capital projects and help offset fluctuations in future debt service revenues and expenses. Use of funding from the Debt Stabilization Fund is subject to appropriations.

Mr. Harding YEA, Mr. Lummis YEA, Mr. McGovern YEA, Ms. Walser YEA, Mr. Fantini YEA, Mr. Grassi YEA, Mayor Sullivan YEA.

**#05-087, Joint Motion by Mr. Grassi and Mr. Harding** that the Superintendent develop a baseline system for report cards and progress reports for grades K-8. Further, that the Superintendent develop a consistent schedule for distribution throughout the school year. Ms. Walser asked the makers of the motion for the meaning of "baseline system for report cards and progress reports for grades K-8".

Mr. Grassi was heard in support of his motion. Members raised the following questions, comments and concerns:

- School Committee should not be mandating another centralized system for communicating with parents

- Concerned that one size report does not fit all
- Insure that report cards are alerting parents as to what is going on with their child
- Want to see report cards consistent in each school - not in support of baseline system
- Insure that information is reported consistently
- System is inefficient - we should move to a web-based system
- Concerned that we do not know what we are asking the Superintendent, principals and teachers to do
- What is the benefit to teachers and students
- What is the cost to teachers, students, etc.
- Communication is the most important piece
- Pleased that the Superintendent is polling parents re report cards
- Would like to see a list of what is included in baseline system
- What should be included in baseline system and how much time would it take
- Have a roundtable discussion and include Principals
- Survey parents and have them tell us what they need

The Superintendent responded to some of the above questions, comments and concerns. On a motion by Ms. Walser, **#05-087, Joint Motion by Mr. Grassi and Mr. Harding** is placed on the Calendar.

**#05-089, Motion by Ms. Walser** that the Superintendent provide the School Committee with a report on plans for creating a strategic plan for upgrading elementary school buildings. Ms. Walser was heard in support of her motion. Mr. Lummis moved a friendly amendment that "plans for creating a strategic plan..." be changed to "plans for creating a capital needs analysis and recommended steps..." Ms. Walser accepted Mr. Lummis' amendment. The Superintendent and Mr. Maloney were heard. On a motion by Mr. Lummis, seconded by Ms. Walser, it was voted to accept **#05-089**, as amended, as follows: that the Superintendent provide the School Committee with a report on plans for creating a capital needs analysis and recommended steps for upgrading elementary school buildings.

Mr. Harding in the Chair.

At this time, the Chair turned the meeting over to the Superintendent for the RSTA presentation. The Superintendent introduced Dr. Michael Ananis, Executive Director of RSTA, who thanked the RSTA faculty and staff, the Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent, School Committee, Program and Advisory Committees for the excellent work done to gain full approval for all programs. Dr. Ananis introduced Sue Walsh, Chair of the General Advisory Committee who shared the formal report with Members. The Superintendent and Dr. Ananis responded to some of the following questions and comments raised by Members:

- What does accreditation hold for future recruitment
- Has the City Council been informed
- How many students are enrolled in RSTA majors
- What is the plan for increasing enrollment during the next few years
- How many students are enrolled in Minuteman and Shore Collaborative
- Given our demographics, 1 out of 3 children should be enrolled in vocational education
- Would like to know what happens to RSTA graduates
- Looking forward to continued success

The Members congratulated the Superintendent, Dr. Ananis and staff and thanked them for the presentation.

At this time, the Chair presented Student Representative Krishana House with a plaque and thanked her for her service. Ms. House thanked the Members and said she was very fortunate to be a part of the Committee.

The Chair turned the meeting over to the Superintendent for a presentation on the Status of CRLS Graduation Class of 2005. The Superintendent introduced Maryann McDonald, Executive Director of Student Achievement and Accountability. Ms. McDonald and her team of Dr. Knight, CRLS Principal, Candace Dunlop, Dean of Learning Community "L", Lynn Williams, Guidance Coordinator, and Gail Stein, MCAS Coordinator walked the Members through a brief presentation on "Senior Class of 2005 Graduation Rates and MCAS Scores", including:

- ✓ CPS District Trends, MCAS Competency Determination and Graduation Rates 2003-2005
- ✓ Status of the Class of 2005
- ✓ MCAS Summary
- ✓ Summary of Spring 2005 Retest Results
- ✓ Portfolios
- ✓ Demographic Composition of those students not passing the MCAS

The Superintendent and staff responded to some of the following questions, comments and concerns raised by Members:

- Did the LEP students who did not pass come through our system and how can we help them
- Is there a pattern where students from certain countries are having the most difficulty
- Are we doing outreach to parents
- Will more time in the school day be helpful to LEP students
- Happy that the graduation rate looks better this year
- How old are the children in the Saturday program and would it make sense to move the age down
- If we still have a relationship with the Cambridge Housing Authority who coordinates it
- How do we track students who do not pass MCAS
- Do we measure deficits in freshmen
- Is math still a problem for our students and what are we doing to help them
- Happy that we know the names of students and helping them to strive and achieve
- What is the drop out rate and is there any way to know how many children not in school are still in Cambridge

The Members thanked the Superintendent and staff for the presentation.

Mayor Sullivan moved that the June 14 public hearing on relocation of Central Administration be held at 159 Thorndike at 6:00 p.m. with tours of the building beginning at 5:30. At the request of Mr. Lummis, the Superintendent said the delay in the recommendation is because we are waiting for further information from the City that will help with the recommendation, as well as hearing comments from the public.

The Chair turned the meeting over to the Deputy Superintendent for an update on the anti-bullying program. Dr. Turk introduced Dr. Jo Sullivan, Executive Director, Curriculum Development and Ms. Kim DeAndrade, Program Leader, Health Education, who walked Members through "Bullying Program Update", including:

1. Olweus Program Description
2. Common Elements of Cambridge Programs
3. School Implementation
4. Examples of Bullying Behaviors and Responses
5. Examples of How Schools Document Incidents of Bullying

Mr. Fantini in the Chair.

The Superintendent, Dr. Turk and staff responded to some of the following questions, comments and concerns raised by Members:

- Are we doing anything with the peer mediation program
- Pleased with the work being done to evaluate the anti-bullying program
- Having a common program will help to show improvement across programs
- Have all schools done the survey
- Will there be a designated on-site coordinator
- How will the training take place
- K-8 model is a strength for the district

The Members thanked the Superintendent and staff for the presentation.

#### **Late Orders**

On a motion by Mr. McGovern, it was voted that the School Committee send a letter to Dr. Joseph Petner and staff at the Haggerty School, congratulating them on receiving accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Mr. Grassi, it was voted that the School Committee send a letter congratulating Margaret Giacoppo on her retirement.

On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Mr. Grassi, it was voted that the School Committee send a letter congratulating Eileen Taxe-Levine for receiving the Massachusetts Service-Learning Teacher Leader Award.

Mr. Lummis raised a question regarding the letter from Haitian parents. The Superintendent was heard.

On a motion by Mr. McGovern, seconded by Mr. Lummis, it was voted to adjourn (8:50 p.m.).

Adjourned  
Marilyn Y. Bradshaw  
Executive Secretary to the School Committee